

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants wish to point out that this application was submitted as a national stage entry of a PCT application filed in Germany, initially containing twenty (20) claims. During the International phase of the application prosecution, the specification was amended and the claims were amended resulting in nineteen (19) remaining claims. Upon entry into the national stage in the United States as an elected office, Applicants filed a copy of the published PCT application in German, an English translation of the published application, a copy of the replacement pages for the specification and claims in German, an English translation of the replacement pages, and a Preliminary Amendment that modified the claims by eliminating multiple dependencies. Apparently, the amendments from the International phase were not entered in the U.S. national stage, although the Preliminary Amendment was entered. The accompanying amendments to the specification and claims incorporate the above-mentioned amendments from the International phase with the previously entered Preliminary Amendment.

Claims 1-20 were pending in the application. Claims 10-20 have been cancelled without prejudice, Claims 1, 5, 7, and 8 have been amended, and Claims 21-30 have been added. Therefore, Claims 1-9 and 21-30 are pending in the application.

Applicant submits herewith an Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.97(c). The requisite fee for submission of an Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. §1.97(c) is being submitted herewith.

Restriction/Election

The Examiner has asserted that the claims of the above-referenced application are directed to more than one species of the generic invention and identified the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention:

- Species I: Figs. 1-4
- Species II: Figs. 5 and 5.1; and
- Species III: Figs. 6-12.

The Examiner has required Applicant to elect a single species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Applicant therefore provisionally elects the species identified above as "Species I: Figs. 1-4."

The following claims are readable on such species:

1-8, 29, and 30.

Traverse

Applicants also respectfully traverse the Examiner's restriction requirement, and requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement.

The Examiner has asserted that claim 1 is generic, but states that the species do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. Applicants respectfully traverse. PCT Rule 13.4 allows the international application to include dependent claims, claiming specific forms of the invention claimed in an independent claim, even where the features of any dependent claim could be considered as constituting in themselves an invention. While not all the features of the fastening system disclosed in the specification are illustrated in every drawing, there is only one independent claim from which all the remaining claims depend. The subject matter of Claim 1 is disclosed to have at least two pairs of opposite retaining profiles and requires at least one (first) pair of opposite retaining profiles having complementary hook elements; a second pair of opposite retaining profiles may also have hook elements, or may alternatively have a different profile. Claims 1-8 are directed to the fastening system with hook profiles. Specific examples of alternate profiles are claimed in Claims 9 and 21-28. Figures 1-4 particularly show a fastening system profile having hook projections that can be applied to all four sides of a rectangular panel. Figures 6-12 particularly show a fastening system profile that can be applied to the long sides of such rectangular panel while the profile of Figures 1-4 is applied to the short sides of such panel.

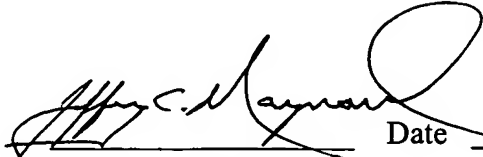
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that only a single invention is claimed in the present application having a single independent claim with several dependent claims directed to specific forms of the invention claimed in the independent claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a diligent effort to address the restriction identified by the Examiner. In view of the above amendments and remarks, all pending claims are believed to be patentable, and thus, the case is in condition for allowance. In the event that there is any question concerning this response, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully

urged to telephone the undersigned attorney so that prosecution of the application may be expedited. Examination on the merits of this application is awaited.

Respectfully submitted,

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